



# POP Briefs

## USAID's Family Planning Services

USAID promotes the ability of couples and individuals to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children by maximizing access to and improving the quality of family planning. Since the inception of the population program in 1965, USAID has contributed to the global effort to stabilize world population growth and protect human health.

Family planning programs:

- Provide modern methods of contraception to hundreds of millions of couples annually;
- Save the lives of tens of thousands of mothers and children and enhance their health and well-being;
- Slow population growth and reduce poverty.

As the world's leading donor to family planning services in the developing world, USAID is unique for its extensive on-the-ground field presence. Agency Missions serve as the point of direct contact and USAID's technical staff works with U.S. and host-country partners to design family planning and reproductive health programs centered on clients' needs and expressed desires. All efforts focus on initiatives that are the most cost-effective for promoting quality, maximizing access, and achieving sustainable public health impact. The full range of activities carried out by the Agency contributes all the necessary ingredients for a thriving family planning program.

### Program Assistance Is Offered In Many Areas.

USAID-funded programs have trained more than half a million medical professionals and community-based health workers which have helped increase access to and improve the quality of family planning services and client

education, especially for people living in hard-to-reach rural communities.

USAID has developed a global system for the delivery of contraceptive supplies.

Numerous countries and donors rely on the Agency's contraceptive supply forecasting system, designed to ensure availability and contraceptive choices year 'round.

USAID helps developing country professionals collect and use data to plan and evaluate their programs and to develop and implement policies that facilitate access to and quality of family planning and reproductive health services.

USAID pioneered contraceptive social marketing programs and supports innovative mass media and public information campaigns that educate consumers about important health issues ranging from family planning and contraception to maternal and child health, to prevention of HIV/AIDS.

USAID's contraceptive research and development has led to significant advances in developing new and improved contraceptive pills, IUDs, and female controlled barrier methods that can protect against sexually transmitted infections. USAID also uses research to develop a better understanding of the needs of clients and improves services.

The Demographic and Health Surveys program (DHS) increases the quality and credibility of reproductive health information for policy, planning, and program evaluation through analysis of population and reproductive health issues at all levels. These would include statistics on maternal health and mortality, fertility, contraceptive use, HIV/AIDS, child health, and safe motherhood.



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## FACTS AND FIGURES

Since 1965, the use of modern family planning methods in the developing world has more than quadrupled – from less than 10 percent to 39 percent today.

In the 28 countries with the largest USAID-sponsored programs, the average number of children per family has dropped from more than six to less than four.

Researchers estimate that without organized family planning programs, there would be a half billion more people in the world today.

### USAID Response

More than 200 million women in the developing world will enter their reproductive years during the next decade. To meet their needs and increase the impact of its programs, USAID has set the following priorities:

#### **Expand USAID's global initiative, Maximizing Access and Quality of Care (MAQ).**

MAQ identifies and addresses barriers to client access and works to improve family planning service delivery standards and quality. Additional assistance is essential in such areas as provider training, service management and supervision, client education, and increasing the choice of available contraceptive methods.

**Increase women and couple's access to services.** More than 380 million women, nearly 60% of couples in the developing world (excluding China), want to limit or space their births. Yet more than 150 million of these women do not use family planning services because of lack of accurate information and poor access to quality services. Given the AIDS pandemic, it is especially necessary to reach women who have a high risk of HIV/AIDS infection.

**Broaden access to a broad range of reproductive health care.** Women want and need access to reproductive health services. USAID is working to link its family planning programs with other community-based efforts to

improve maternal and child health, prevent HIV/AIDS, and enhance women's status.

**Strengthen post abortion care.** Improving treatment for complications of unsafe abortion not only saves lives, but is a proven and highly effective tool for providing women with the family planning information and services they need to avoid repeat abortions.

**Provide special programs for youth.** More than 1 billion young people are entering their reproductive years – the largest cohort of youth in history – and another 2 billion are right behind them. Too many young people lack basic information about reproductive and sexual health and are not being adequately served by existing programs. The challenge is to establish patterns of informed and responsible reproductive decision-making early in life. Delaying sexual activity and first pregnancy, and increasing responsible practices, including abstinence and condom use, will not only protect young people's health and quality of life, but contribute to the health and prosperity of the world's future population.

**Help prevent HIV/AIDS transmission.** Further incorporating education and counseling to promote condom use and other HIV/AIDS prevention messages in family planning services, especially in medium to high prevalence countries, should contribute to the fight to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. Currently USAID works to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, promote private-sector condom marketing, and mounts intensive communication campaigns to promote safer sexual behaviors.

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